[The Gilyak (or Nivkhi, as they are known in the Soviet Union) live on northern Sakhalin and on the lower reaches of the Amur River and adjacent areas in northeastern Asia. There are probably about 4,000 of these people remaining; they speak a language of the Paleo-Siberian group. The Gilyak were formerly principally dependent on fishing and sea mammal hunting, with fish being the diet staple. They are now generally settled on collective farms, with agriculture and cattle breeding being important.

The Gilyak File consists of 13 sources, numbered 1-2, 4, 6-7, 9-10, 13, 15, and 19-22. Six of the sources are in English (4, 9, 10, 20-22), four are translations from the German (2, 13, 15, 19), and three are translations from the Russian (1, 6-7). The basic sources are 1: Shternberg and 2: Schrenck. 1: Shternberg, by a Russian anthropologist who worked among the Gilyak in 1890-1897 and 1910, is probably the most valuable ethnographic account of the Gilyak, concentrating on social organization (a Marxist account). 2: Schrenck is a general historical and ethnographic description of the peoples of the Amur region, particularly the Gilyak, deriving from travels in 1854 to 1856. 4: Ivanov et al. is a cultural summary from the Soviet viewpoint, giving some data on the recent life on the Gilyak. 6: Kreinovich and 7: Kreinovich are descriptions of fishing and hunting in 1931 by a Russian anthropologist. 9: Hawes, 19: Genest, 20: Bush and 22: Knox are travel accounts dating from between ca. 1865 and ca. 1900. 10: Coxwell is a selection of Gilyak folktales taken from a larger work. 13: Seeland is an ethnographic sketch of the Gilyak as the author observed them in the second half of the nineteenth century. 15: Pilsudski is a study of pregnancy and birth dating from around 1900. 21: Golder contains a few pages on the general history of the Amur region by a historian.

The Gilyak File contains a considerable amount of cultural data and should be sufficient for most cross-cultural purposes. It should be noted that most of the data pertain to the 19th century Gilyak. There was a tremendous change in their life after the Bolshevik Revolution, which is noted very sparingly by the Soviet anthropologists. Researchers should be aware of these differences, both in data and in political viewpoint. The file was processed between 1953 and 1968.]